

Cardinals' opener in limbo

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TRIBUNE

The NFL chose Tuesday to delay its decision whether to play this weekend's games in light of the massive terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., leaving the Arizona Cardinals in limbo on the status of their season opener.

The Cardinals are scheduled to play the Washington Redskins Sunday at FedEx Field in Landover, Md. Their hotel in Arlington, Va., is about a quarter-mile from the Pentagon, which was one of the targets of a plane crash Tuesday.

"I wouldn't be worried about our safety," safety Pat Tillman said Tuesday morning while watching the TV images of the devastation at the Cards' Tempe complex. "My concern would be if it is appropriate. The importance of football ranks zero compared to what happened.

"When you compare it ... we're worthless. We're actors."

Cardinals owner Bill Bidwill

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actually spent Monday night in Manhattan for a league meeting and was in New York Tuesday when the attacks started. Team officials, including coach Dave McGinnis, talked to Bidwill on Tuesday morning and said Bidwill was OK.

Cardinals players had Tuesday off and will resume practice today. The Cardinals will proceed as if there will be a game. Media coordinator Greg Gladysiewski was still planning to fly to Washington today as part of his normal preparation for a road game, assuming air travel is resumed throughout the country.

NFL spokesman Joe Browne said the league will "gather information" before making a decision to play or not sometime in the next two days.

"I don't have any (opinions) right now," McGinnis said when asked if he thought the Cardinals should play. "That's not where my thoughts are. My thoughts are with the people involved. We are going to continue to prepare right now and get a directive from the league office and follow that to the letter."

McGinnis said he will gather the team today — hopefully by then knowing the NFL's decision — and address the situation.

The Redskins aren't the only team supposed to host a game Sunday near the sites of the terrorists' acts. The New York Giants are scheduled to host Green Bay in East Rutherford, N.J., and Pittsburgh has a home game against Cleveland. The Baltimore Ravens have a home game Monday night against Minnesota.

The Redskins, Ravens and the NFL all closed their offices Tuesday.

Because the NFL decided not to have an off week between the league championship games and the Super Bowl this year, there is not an open date in which to shift the schedule to make up for canceled games. Logistically, it would seem the NFL's only choices would be to play all of the games or cancel all of the games.

Late NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle once said one of his biggest regrets was his decision to let games be played the Sunday following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November of 1963. That was the topic of conversation Tuesday between longtime Cardinals trainer John Omohundro and receiver Rob Moore.

"With everything that happened and the fuss that went

on with (the Kennedy situation), I don't know (if we should play)," Moore said. "If anything, you almost have to ask the public about it and get a feel for that and be sensitive to their feelings.

"... When you look at it in terms of the season and football, I'm quite sure if we do go to Washington to play, they will dot all the i's and cross all the t's and make sure it's an extremely safe situation for us."

Moore, who grew up on Long Island and played five seasons with the New York Jets, is very familiar with the area near the World Trade Center and frequently saw the twin towers stretch into the skyline when he drove into Manhattan.

"Actually taking that drive (now) and not seeing that," Moore said, "it's going to be unbelievable."